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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/57/528)*]

57/137. Question of Tokelau

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of Tokelau,

Having examined the chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to Tokelau,[1]

Recalling the solemn declaration on the future status of Tokelau, delivered by the *Ulu-o-Tokelau* (the highest authority on Tokelau) on 30 July 1994, which states that an act of self-determination in Tokelau is now under active consideration, together with the constitution of a self-governing Tokelau, and that the present preference of Tokelau is for a status of free association with New Zealand,

Recalling also its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and all resolutions and decisions of the United Nations relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular General Assembly resolution 56/71 of 10 December 2001,

Recalling further the emphasis placed in the solemn declaration on the terms of Tokelau's special relationship with New Zealand, including the expectation that the form of help that Tokelau could continue to expect from New Zealand in promoting the well-being of its people, besides its external interests, would be clearly established within the framework of that relationship,

Noting with appreciation the continuing exemplary cooperation of New Zealand as the administering Power with regard to the work of the Special Committee relating to Tokelau and its readiness to permit access by United Nations visiting missions to the Territory,

Noting also with appreciation the collaborative contribution to the development of Tokelau by New Zealand and the specialized agencies and other

[1] A/57/23 (Part II) and Add.1, chap. XI. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 23*.

organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization,

Recalling the dispatch in 1994 of a United Nations visiting mission to Tokelau,

Welcoming the dispatch in August 2002 of a United Nations Mission to Tokelau, at the invitation of the Government of New Zealand and the representatives of Tokelau,

Having examined the report of the United Nations Mission to Tokelau, 2002,[2]

Noting that, as a small island Territory, Tokelau exemplifies the situation of most remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Noting also that, as a case study pointing to successful cooperation for decolonization, Tokelau has wider significance for the United Nations as it seeks to complete its work in decolonization,

1. *Notes* that Tokelau remains firmly committed to the development of self-government and to an act of self-determination that would result in Tokelau assuming a status in accordance with the options on future status for Non-Self-Governing Territories contained in principle VI of the annex to General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960;

2. *Also notes* the desire of Tokelau to move at its own pace towards an act of self-determination;

3. *Further notes* the inauguration in 1999 of a national Government based on village elections by universal adult suffrage;

4. *Acknowledges* Tokelau's goal to return authority to its traditional leadership, and its wish to provide that leadership with the necessary support to carry out its functions in the contemporary world;

5. *Also acknowledges* the progress made towards that goal under the Modern House of Tokelau project, and Tokelau's view that that project, in its governance and economic development dimensions, is seen by its people as the means to achieving their act of self-determination;

6. *Further acknowledges* Tokelau's initiative in devising a strategic economic development plan for the period 2002–2004 to advance its capacity for self-government;

7. *Notes* that, consistent with the expressed desires of past traditional leaders and the principles of the Modern House of Tokelau, Tokelau has established a local public service employer which enabled the New Zealand State Services Commissioner to withdraw from his role as employer of the Tokelau Public Service as from 30 June 2001;

8. *Welcomes* the initiation of the dialogue with the administering Power and the Territory in June 2001 with a view to the development of a programme of work for Tokelau in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/147 of 8 December 2000;

9. *Acknowledges* the continuing support which New Zealand has committed to the Modern House of Tokelau project in 2002–2003, and the cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme in aligning its programmes under the project;

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[2] A/AC.109/2002/31.

10. *Notes* that the Constitution of a self-governing Tokelau will continue to develop as a part and as a consequence of the building of the Modern House of Tokelau, and that both have national and international importance for Tokelau;

11. *Acknowledges* Tokelau's need for continued reassurance given the cultural adjustments that are taking place with the strengthening of its capacity for self-government and, given that local resources cannot adequately cover the material side of self-determination, the ongoing responsibility of Tokelau's external partners to assist Tokelau in balancing its desire to be self-reliant to the greatest extent possible with its need for external assistance;

12. *Notes* the special challenge inherent in the situation of Tokelau, among the smallest of the small Territories, and how a Territory's exercise of its inalienable right to self-determination may be brought closer, as in the case of Tokelau, by the meeting of that challenge in innovative ways;

13. *Acknowledges* the desire of the partners to reaffirm their commitment to each other, and the efforts being made in the context of the draft programme of work for Tokelau to identify the principles underpinning the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau with a view to establishing a dynamic basis for its future development;

14. *Welcomes* the assurance of the Government of New Zealand that it will meet its obligations to the United Nations with respect to Tokelau and abide by the freely expressed wishes of the people of Tokelau with regard to their future status;

15. *Also welcomes* the cooperative attitude of the other States and Territories in the region towards Tokelau, its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs;

16. *Further welcomes* Tokelau's associate membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its recent accession to associate membership in the Forum Fisheries Agency;

17. *Approves* the report of the United Nations Mission to Tokelau, 2002;[2]

18. *Notes* that a study to review the options for Tokelau's future self-determination is recommended in the report, and also notes the willingness expressed by the United Nations Development Programme to assist in this regard upon request from Tokelau;

19. *Calls upon* New Zealand and Tokelau to consider developing an education programme to inform the population of Tokelau about the nature of self-determination, including the three options of integration, free association and independence, so that it may be better prepared to face a future decision on this matter, and requests the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to provide all available assistance in this regard;

20. *Calls upon* the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further develops its economy and governance structures in the context of its ongoing constitutional evolution;

21. *Requests* the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

73rd plenary meeting
11 December 2002